



Public Safety Communications Highlights

- The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) still has 11 vacancies in its July 23-26 offering of FEMA E-949 Communications Unit Leader (COML), at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland. FEMA reimburses travel and on-campus lodging is provided at no charge, so the only expense is meals. Some prerequisites are required. More info about EMI offerings may be found at: <https://training.fema.gov/EMI/>. Questions? Contact Marschal Rothe, Montana DES, 406-324-4776 or mrothe@mt.gov.
- As the January 1, 2013 narrowbanding deadline rapidly approaches, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) announced a new Narrowband status reporting tool available at: http://www.publicsafetytools.info/narrowband/national_tracking.php
- Dorothy Gremaux, 9-1-1 Supervisor and E9-1-1 Coordinator for the Central Montana 9-1-1 Center provided another update on the center's deployment to statewide trunking. The deployment went well and the system is stable. A few small transition issues are being addressed, but they are all related to programming, not equipment. Extensive testing of the area's trunked and conventional digital radio system demonstrated good functionality.

Broadband Spectrum Act Signed into Law

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 was signed by the President on February 22. Title IV of the Act establishes an interoperable Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) and contains several related public safety communications and spectrum provisions. Here are some of the major provisions of the public safety portions of the Act:

- Reallocation of the 700 MHz "D Block" section of the spectrum from commercial to public safety use;
- Public safety retention of 700 MHz narrowband spectrum. The FCC may allow flexible use of 700 MHz narrowband spectrum for public safety broadband communications, subject to FCC technical and interference protection measures;

- Establishment of a new independent federal entity, the First Responder Network Authority ("FirstNet") within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to oversee the construction, deployment and operation of the NPSBN. FirstNet will also hold the single public safety broadband wireless license, which includes the 700 MHz D Block and existing 700 MHz public safety broadband spectrum
- Establishment of an Interoperability Board within the FCC to develop recommended minimum technical requirements, based on the LTE standard, to ensure nationwide interoperability for the NPSBN;
- Authorization for the FCC to conduct spectrum auctions and the establishment of the Public Safety Trust Fund for the deposit and specified use of auctions revenues. As auction revenues are deposited in the Fund, they are to be used in the following priority order:
 - Up to \$2B for repayment of funds borrowed by NTIA to establish FirstNet.
 - \$135M to the State and Local Implementation Grant Program.
 - \$7B to the Network Construction Fund for all FirstNet responsibilities except administrative.
 - \$100M to National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for public safety research.
 - \$20.4B for deficit reduction.
 - \$115M to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to support a 9-1-1/NG9-1-1 grant program.
 - An additional \$200M to NIST for public safety research.

Any remaining funds deposited into the Public Safety Trust Fund are to be used for deficit reduction. Passage of this agreement represents a historic milestone and has been a number of years in the making. Creation of a nationwide NPSBN was one of the last remaining recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, in the wake of the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001. The legislation is viewed as a way to not only relieve a growing shortage of wireless spectrum, but also as a means to improve emergency communications throughout the U.S.

The reallocation of the D Block means that public safety will have the funding and 20 MHz of contiguous spectrum to deploy a nationwide interoperable public-safety broadband network.

HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

APCO Montana Chapter Meeting

The Montana Chapter of APCO met in Helena on Tues., March 20 and convened several committee meetings prior to the Chapter meeting, including its Legislative; Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (TERT); Training and Standards; 9-1-1; and Conference Committees. President Susan Bomstad reported that efforts are moving forward to again submit the 20-Year Dispatcher Retirement proposal to the 2013 Legislature. Plans are in the works to offer the Team Leader TERT certification training on Fri., June 15 as part of the Montana APCO conference in Great Falls.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (MSPOA) convention to be held June 12-15 at the Great Falls Holiday Inn, 400 10th Avenue South. Roxanne Ross, Montana Law Enforcement Academy, is scheduled to present a day-long domestic violence training program on June 12. Registration forms are available [here](#).

The Training and Standard Committee reported on the Public Safety Communications (PSC) Professional Certificate offered by the MSU College of Technology in Great Falls and indicated that the Montana Law Enforcement Academy offers the Public Safety Communicator (PSC) one-week basic course four times a year.

Chapter officers were installed for the coming term as follows: President: Susan Bomstad, Missoula 9-1-1; Vice President: Michele Blais, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP); Secretary/Treasurer: Peggy Glass, Park County 9-1-1 Director; and National Executive Council Representative: Kimberly Burdick, Chouteau County Communications Manager. Congratulations!

Nominations are being accepted for the annual Montana Chapter APCO awards for line supervisors, information-technologist, radio-technologist, telecommunicator, trainer and manager/director. Forms are available [here](#) and are due June 1. All winners will be entered for a chance to win a free registration to the APCO International conference, which will be in Minneapolis, MN in August.

After the June conference, the next Montana Chapter APCO meeting will be held Oct. 2 in Miles City. The 2013 conference will be in Butte.

Eastern Tier Consortium Met in Sidney

The Eastern Tier Consortium met at the Richland County Emergency Operations Center in Sidney on Wed., March 21. Several guests from the Northern

Tier Consortium attended to discuss plans and the tentative schedule for connecting communications sites located in the eastern part of the Northern Tier into the Zone 2 Eastern Controller.

Richland County Undersheriff Denny Palmer called the meeting to order and Glendive Police Chief Alan Michaels gave a report on the current status of the microwave system north of the Fallon Site. Roger Smith, Lewis and Clark County, explained a plan to relocate the dishes and face mounts on the Government Hill tower to the 135-foot level down from the 180-foot level to provide more stability during high-wind conditions. The microwave signal between the Hathaway and Government Hill sites will remain at 99.999% availability; however, the signal between the Government Hill and Fallon sites will fall to a 99.998% availability, which is slightly lower than the approved technical requirement for construction.

Roger also gave an update on the Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB) and the statewide public safety communications system. Dale Osborne, MHP, and Max Pangburn, Richland County's Public Safety Communications System Manager, informed the group about SIGB Technical Working Group activities, and Max provided information on Eastern Zone 2 Controller operations. Butch Renders, Richland County DES, reported on prospective plans for completing the microwave backbone between Sidney and Billings as well as a possible planning grant. After the meeting was adjourned, several people toured the facility and zone controller.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Tues., April 10: Statewide Interoperability Governing Board (SIGB)**
Helena • 10:00 am - noon
State Capitol, Room 152
http://itsd.mt.gov/policy/councils/sigb/04102012_meeting.mcp
- **Tues., April 17: State Agency Radio Users Task Force**
Helena • 2:30 - 4:00 pm
125 N. Roberts, Mitchell Building, Room 160
- **Tues., April 24: SIGB Technical Working Group**
Billings • 1:00 - 4:30 pm
Billings Fire Station #1 Training Rm.
2305 8th Ave. North

